

FOI number: **HBC\_FOI\_20200179**  
Date FOI Received: **25/02/2020**  
Department: **Council Tax**  
Title: **Council tax credit refunds**  
Description: **Break down of the payment methods used for Council Tax between 2016/17 and 2019/20 and whether refunds are processed automatically.**

**Request: (As Redacted sent by requestor)**

I am aware that sometimes when people close their council tax account, they are often left with money in that account. This results in a closed council tax account being in credit.

I am also aware that some people still choose to pay their council tax by cash or by cheque.

**I would like to know, for each of the following tax years: 2016/17, 17/18, 18/19, 19/20 (up to now if possible): How many council tax accounts paid for their council tax by cash/cheque? How much was this as a proportion of total active accounts?**

Separately, I am aware that many councils automatically refund closed accounts where the account holder has paid by certain methods, which make it possible to refund them (such as direct debit), whereas with other payment methods this would not be possible:

**Can you list the payment methods (if any) that would result in you automatically refunding an account if it were closed in credit? *NB automatically here means, without the customer having to take any form of action whatsoever (so you don't have to contact them to confirm payment details or anything similar)***

**Response: (Response as Redacted sent by service)**

Please see table below for the answer to Q1 – I have included 2020/21 as we have sent out the bills for this year. Please note we do not hold information on the exact method of payment for non DD payers.

Financial year	Number of cash / cheque / card payers.	Total number of payers
16/17	16,287	42,655
17/18	15,844	42,969
18/19	16,145	43,498
19/20	16,708	44,105
20/21	16,962	44,616

We would only automatically refund an account if they paid by Direct Debit

If you have any queries about the processing of your request then please do not hesitate to contact me. Further information explaining the Council's process for responding to information requests together with a complaints/appeals procedure is available in our reception or via our website at:

<https://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/Your-Council/Official-Publications--Guides--Policies/Access-to-Information.aspx>

The Information Commissioner oversees the application of the Freedom of Information Act. You may contact the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioners Office  
Wycliffe House, Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF  
Telephone: 01625 545700  
Website: [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

Please include the above reference number on all correspondence related to this request.

Thank you for your request.

Kind regards  
Information Services